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Untitled

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WRITING CONTEST Winners

FIRST PLACE

Back in the Day

By Raquelle Newman

My grandparents seldom speak of what it was like
...back in the day.

When the smoke was smoggier,
And when cigarettes were still cool.

They've never mentioned what it was like to raise up 5 kids in the city
...back in the day.

One boy and 4 girls, during the 60's; during the King's time...

During our time, that pivotal time in history.

We never talk about what it was like to witness the whites put up "For Sale Signs"
At first sight of the new "colored family" in the neighborhood
...back in the day.

When candy cost a dime and when shoulder pads were still fashionable.
I'm sure they could recall

The gall people had:

Making them live in constant fear,
Sheltering their family from the blatant hate,
The irate people, the blind ignorance
...back in the day.

They would not dare mention the pain and betrayal that they must have felt,
To see all those indications of the bigotry that they would have preferred to ignore.

Now my grandma looks white, she's quite fair actually,
but she couldn't pass as "accepted" because she married a carpenter Cuban.

That was a double whammy

...back in the day.

And her oldest daughter would never conform or perform how the racists wanted her to...
She's fair, too.

She chose to identify with her family,
To take the low road, if you will.

She protested on the streets alongside some of the greatest
...back in the day.

Progressive she was, but my grandparents rarely talk about their oldest son.

A good looking man, of course, coming from a good looking family.

But the streets and the hard times took hold of him,

A halfway house consumed his teenage years
...back in the day.

But regardless, my grandparents always tell me to look forward,
And help avoid a repeat of history,

The struggle that we never talk about because
"It was so long ago" as they say,

It was,

...back in the day.

Third Place

Change of Pace

By Aubree Sepler

Second Place

Change Is Heaven

By Valerie Perczek

Change is heaven
that exists as a field of lavender,
filling the collective soul with the smell of peace.

(Peace exists as
a lingering, blue cloud).

It is you
emerging from the painted field
with a loud stride
and the courage
to create something different.

The past
has never been heard or seen
and all there is
is now

to change as the earth
has always done.

Change
calls for action as
the heart shouts guidance.

Last year I wanted a change of pace
so you know what I did?

I had the bored, gum-snapping waitress
put my ice cream in a cup instead of a cone.

I ultimately sent it back because I missed
the satisfying crack as I fractured bits of
the cone between my munching molars but

You know what that means?

Change is possible, ladies and gentlemen!

Why, just the other day I had a startling
revelation. I took a trip to Boston in one of
those little commuter planes. You know, the

one with twenty-four seats and little to
no protection against Mother Nature? That's
the one! I was armed with a Cosmopolitan
(magazine, that is) and a pair of Dolce shades
people would kill for when my

little commuter plane started tilting and tottering.

Our pilot came on the loudspeaker and announced
we were just hitting a little bit of turbulence at this
high altitude of 36,000 feet but not to worry, folks,
we'll touch down in Boston in about an hour or
three. I'll tell you right now I have never been so
terrified in my entire life. Not anxious or apprehensive,
but frightened for the future of me.

Do you know what that feels like?

It made me feel human.

and when we touched down in Boston three hours
later, I felt changed. Of course, I had to go out and
celebrate my triumph over the wrath of the elements,
so I journeyed to a sweet little bistro in Quincy
Market to purchase a delectable ice cream.

Want to guess how I asked for it?

In a cup!

And with a copious mountain of rainbow sprinkles.

Hey, if you're going to change, you may as well go for the rainbow sprinkles.